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ABSTRACT

Business and industry have been shaken by the explosion of new technology, and scientific and technological advances will continue to have a profound impact on the labor market. Vocational education plays a key role in preparing citizens for jobs. This manual encourages greater use of advisory committees in vocational education programs. Advisory committees assist in: (1) general program planning; (2) curriculum and instruction advisement; (3) equipment and facilities advisement; (4) student recruitment, career guidance, and placement services; (5) professional development; (6) community public relations; and (7) program evaluation. Each section of the manual offers a step-by-step approach to organizing advisory committees: (1) what advisory committees do in Alabama; (2) structural features of advisory committees--the link between the community and the schools; (3) recruiting advisory committee members; (4) organizing advisory committee meetings; and (5) evaluating committee effectiveness. Throughout the manual are 25 sample materials--forms, letters, and checklists--for establishing successful advisory committees. (NLA)

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VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A GUIDE FOR THEIR EFFECTIVE USE

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THE DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICES

AND

THE ALABAMA COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL
AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

JUNE, 1990

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Modified from ***Vocational Technical Advisory Committees, A Guide to Effective Utilization***, Massachusetts, 1987

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments 1
Mission Statement 3
What Do Advisory Groups Do? 7
- Provide Advice on New Technology 8
- Help Update and Refine the Curriculum 8
- Assist With Recruiting and Placing Students 10
- Generate Positive Public Relations 11
- Assist With Program Planning and Evaluation 11

Structural Features of Advisory Committees 15
- Roles and Responsibilities of Personnel 17
- Reporting Protocols 19
- Setting Policy 19

Recruiting Advisory Committee Members 23
- How Large Should the Committee Be? 23
- Review Program Status 24
- Recruiting Potential Advisors 27
- Where Do You Look for Advisors? 28
- The Logistics of Recruitment 30
- Orienting New Advisors to Their Roles 36
- How to Thank Your Advisors 36

Organizing Advisory Committee Meetings 39
- When Should Advisory Committees Meet? 39
- Who Should Attend the Meeting? 42
- How to Conduct the Meeting 43
- Managing the Meeting 44
- Making Recommendations and Getting Feedback 46

Evaluating Committee Effectiveness 51
- Evaluation by Advisory Committee 51
- Evaluation by School Personnel 52
- Correcting Common Problems 54
- Gold Leaf Awards 54

List of Exhibits

Exhibit 1 Advisory Committees are the Link Between Schools and the Community 16
Exhibit 2 Role of the Facilitator of Program Advisory Committees 18
Exhibit 3 Suggested Responsibilities of Staff Assigned to Manage Advisory Committees and/or Councils 18
Exhibit 4 Organizational Bylaws for Vocational-Technical Program Advisory Committees 20
Exhibit 5 Advisory Committee Member Information Form 25
Exhibit 6 Form Soliciting Continued Membership 26
Exhibit 7 Letter Soliciting Nominations 32
Exhibit 8 Recommendation of Candidate 32
Exhibit 9 Letter Inviting a Possible Candidate 33
Exhibit 10 Letter of Intent 33
Exhibit 11 Recommendation of Candidate to (Program Name) Program Advisory Committee 34
Exhibit 12 Letter Confirming Membership 34
Exhibit 13 Advisory Committee Member Nomination Form 35
Exhibit 14 Sample Job Description for Advisory Committee Members 37
Exhibit 15 Letter of Recognition/Recruitment 38
Exhibit 16 Letter to an Inactive Member 38
Exhibit 17 Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule 40
Exhibit 18 Suggested Schedule and Procedures 41
Exhibit 19 Program Committee Meeting Invitation 43
Exhibit 20 Vocational-Technical Schools Minutes of the Meeting 45
Exhibit 21 Vocational-Technical School Report of Advisory Committee Meeting 45
Exhibit 22 Checklist for Managing a Meeting Effectively 46
Exhibit 23 Suggestion Form 47
Exhibit 24 Checklist for Evaluating Advisory Committees 52
Exhibit 25 Common Problems and How to Solve Them 55

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Mission Statement

The saying "The only thing that is constant in this world is change" is perhaps nowhere more applicable than in the world of work. How many of us would have known, fifty years ago, that in the '90s there would be a great demand for technicians to repair personal computers and install, monitor and reprogram welding robots?

Business and industry have been shaken by the explosion of new technology. Many jobs simply are not done the way they were years ago. And scientific and technological advances will continue to have a profound impact on the labor market. Vocational education plays a key role in preparing citizens for jobs. It must be responsive to the ever changing dynamic work environment.

Schools and colleges with vocational/technical programs are at the cutting edge of change. On the one hand, they are committed to maintaining high standards while preparing students with the skills they need to compete for jobs and further education. On the other hand, they are often strapped by limited resources and faced with changing work environments. How can schools keep pace with the rapid tempo of change in the work world and maintain their standards of excellence?

One answer is to share with educators the collective wisdom that is available in the private sector. The primary avenue for tapping this knowledge and expertise is the effective utilization of vocational/technical advisory committees. Advisory committees representing business and industry, labor, parents, and students serve as a forum for integrating and translating information from the work world into practical methods for education. Advisory committees are the catalyst for change and the key to program relevance.

Effective advisory committees can benefit everyone involved. Administrators receive much-needed assistance. Teachers learn to incorporate technological advances into the curriculum. Potential employers enjoy a more highly skilled work force. And, of course, the bottom line: vocational/technical students are better prepared to enter the work world and to advance in their future.

Advisory committees are making significant contributions to the quality of vocational/technical education in Alabama.

- **General program planning**. Advisory committees help schools and colleges measure trends in the local labor market. They identify new programs that are needed as well as programs that have become obsolete. They help set priorities for allocation of limited resources.

- **Curriculum and instruction advisement**. Advisory committees identify new or developing fields in certain occupations, visit shops to demonstrate specialized skills, and validate tasks to help students become more competitive.

- **Equipment and facilities advisement.** The foresight and generosity of advisory committees have kept Alabama vocational /technical programs in the vanguard of new technology in many occupations. On a statewide basis, advisors have donated millions of dollars worth of industrial equipment and supplies to vocational/technical schools.

- **Student recruitment, career guidance, and placement services**. Advisors employ vocational/technical students as co-op placements and as graduates, and they direct students to other potential employers. Advisors often serve as judges for student organization competitions, and they give valuable prizes to top graduates.

- **Professional development.** Advisors help instructors stay current with technology. Some offer summer jobs to teachers; others sponsor inservice workshops.

- **Community public relations.** Advisory committees represent the school among the business community. They are often the most influential advocate with the school board, and their advice is often the most effective way to institute change.

- **Program evaluation.** Advisory committees work with administrators to develop criteria for determining when vocational/technical programs should be scaled down or terminated. They also make suggestions for modifying exploratory programs to attract top-quality students.

Key to the success of any vocational/technical advisory committee is commitment — not only of the committee members themselves, but also of educational administrators who set the tone for cooperative ventures, and above all, of the teachers, whose mission it is to prepare students to enter the work force.

This manual is geared not only to educational administrators and personnel who are responsible for maintaining advisory committees, but also to advisory committee members who are interested in improving their work for vocational/technical schools.

The purpose of this manual is to encourage greater and more effective use of advisory committees. Each section of the manual offers a step-by-step, "how to do it" approach:

- "What Do Advisory Committees Do?" offers a sampling of the many activities that advisory committees in Alabama have undertaken.
- "Structural Features of Advisory Committees" describes the context in which program committee and general advisory councils operate — that is, the link between the community and the schools.
- "Recruiting Your Advisory Committee Members" offers some pointers on recruiting good advisors: sources, techniques of recruiting and recognizing active members, issues of size of the committee, and term of service.
- "Organizing Advisory Committee Meetings" presents some tools for organizing effective advisory committee meetings: when to schedule them, who to invite and how to run a productive meeting.
- The manual concludes with "Evaluating Committee Effectiveness" tips for periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of vocational/technical advisory committees.

Throughout the manual are sample materials — forms, letters, and checklists — that you may wish to adapt for your own use. They are intended to ease the way toward establishing advisory committees that "work."

What Do Advisory Groups Do?

The mission of advisory groups is to advise, assist and support the school personnel in order to improve planning, operating and evaluating the program area.

In general, advisory committees exist to keep vocational/ technical education in tune with occupational trends. They do this in a variety of ways:

- by advising on equipment and facility use;
- by advising on curriculum and instructional methods;
- by helping to recruit, guide, and advise vocational/technical students;
- by advocating and promoting vocational/technical education with industry and the community; and,
- by helping administrators to plan and evaluate vocational/technical programs.

This chapter offers a "smorgasbord" of activities that might be undertaken by program advisory committees as well as general advisory councils for vocational/technical education. Some require years of discussion and preparation by advisory groups, working with school personnel to address long term needs. Others require only a single meeting and recommendation to school administrators or the school board. Some are small-scale changes that improve a single aspect of a vocational/technical program; others are dramatic alterations that may affect the overall operation of the school, college or skill center.

The important point is that the critical eyes, creative imaginations, and combined strength of a good advisory group can really make things happen. The examples provided in this chapter are intended to generate ideas for ways to use advisory committees and councils for greatest benefit to an institution.

...PROVIDE ADVICE ON NEW TECHNOLOGY

Advisory committees review existing equipment, facilities, and resources. The tour of the shop is a highlight of the program advisory committee meeting. Advisors generally consider how closely the school's equipment matches the equipment used in industry: What is obsolete? What is still needed? Is the shop adequately stocked? Are there sufficient materials for all students in the program? The shop tour may generate a series of grant applications and donations that can turn a shop around in relatively short order.

Advisory committees recommend new programs as well as new equipment. Advisors help schools get the best equipment for their needs at reasonable cost. Not only might they suggest purchasing a generic type of equipment — for example, Computer-Assisted Design (CAD) systems for drafting programs or Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) for machine shops — but they often help the instructional staff select from the different products and models available. Advisors may attend several ad hoc meetings to review sales brochures, observe vendors' demonstrations, and compare quotes.

Vocational/technical administrators in Alabama generally concur that some demonstration of advisory committee support is necessary to procure funds for new equipment. Advisors may also be asked to attend school board meetings to support the school's request for funds.

Advisory committees donate materials, equipment, and services to vocational/technical programs. If the advisors themselves cannot supply a certain item, they may direct the school to someone who can. Sometimes advisors encourage their colleagues to donate the needed supplies. Regardless of the source, schools get a better-stocked shop or classroom and the donor businesses may get a welcome tax benefit.

Advisory committees help schools maintain their libraries of visual aids, magazines, textbooks and reference books. Advisors have provided schools with updated parts catalogs and with published regulations (e.g., for hazardous waste disposal). With the advent of videotape equipment, advisors have contributed videotapes to comprehensive occupational libraries in the schools.

...HELP UPDATE AND REFINE THE CURRICULUM

Advisory committees help develop educational objectives. Sometimes an outside perspective offers new insight on programs that may seem stagnant or unable to keep pace with industry trends. Fresh ideas can help vocational/technical administrators and instructors to place their programs in context and develop new approaches that are more in tune with contemporary expectations.

Advisory committees help to validate task/competency listings for an occupation. These listings provide the foundation for the development of a competency-based vocational/technical program curriculum.

Advisory committees share their expertise on new and developing areas. Change is a constant in the world of vocational/technical education, and advisors can help schools keep pace with the times. They suggest new program areas — such as wastewater treatment or medical office management. And they identify emerging trends in traditional areas — unibody auto construction, computer-assisted drafting, short-order food preparation. Committees often survey the community for job market needs if data is not reliable.

Advisory committees review, evaluate, and advise on the technical content of course materials. Schools have found advisors' input to be helpful in determining whether texts need to be updated or supplemented. Although advisors generally do not select course materials, they may identify occupation-related manuals or catalogues, for example, that are used in their own businesses and would be equally applicable for vocational/ technical training classrooms.

Advisory committees advise on methods of instruction most appropriate for course content. Vocational/technical instructors welcome suggestions that help to hold student interest while advancing the concepts and skills required in the course. Although few advisors have been trained to be teachers, many are in a position to offer unique perspectives from on-the-job training that occurs in their business. Some can identify potential sources of vocational teachers.

Advisory committees help schools to identify skills needed to meet entry-level job requirements. Occupations that are unionized or regulated by the state or industry associations place special emphasis on knowledge of theory and skills required to enter the work force. Advisors representing these occupations can help vocational/technical schools to tailor their programs to ensure ways for schools to use existing facilities and personnel to retrain displaced workers for new occupations, identifying the need for adult education classes in the process.

Advisory committees advise on the extent to which basic skills and work attitudes should be taught. Advisors in the technical shops (e.g., machine shop, electronics, and drafting) have pointed to the need for better preparation in math and computer skills. Some advisors see a need for improved communication skills. And many advisors emphasize the importance of good work attitudes. Much of what committees recommend should be based upon the follow-up of evaluation results noted later in this manual.

Advisory committee members serve as, or arrange for guest speakers. Some advisors have arranged for manufacturers to take their displays to the schools. A drafting advisor may sponsor special workshops for students on the use of drafting film. A chef advisor may demonstrate ice sculpture.

Advisory committees bring special projects to the school. Many schools have initiated successful house-building projects with assistance from several advisory committees: electrical, plumbing, and carpentry. Advisors to auto-body repair shops locate salvage vehicles for students to work on. Carpentry advisory committees devise blueprint projects for students and critique the results. Machine shop committees likewise initiate competitive projects for students and award prizes to the winners.

At meetings of the advisory committees with vocational teachers, advisors contribute to the professional development of instructional staff. By underwriting teachers' membership in industry and trade associations, advisory committees help teachers gain access to technology updates and entree to colleagues in the field. The efforts of advisors may enable teachers to attend conferences or workshops to upgrade their skills. Sometimes advisors sponsor their own tours and workshops for teachers. Moreover, advisors often provide summer employment for teachers to introduce them to technology used in the field and to help upgrade their skills.

...ASSIST WITH RECRUITING AND PLACING STUDENTS

Advisory committees help "sell" vocational/technical education to students. Perhaps one of the most important functions of a program advisor is serving as a role model for students who are considering entering the occupation. This function is most evident when recruiting students for nontraditional occupations and when recruiting special-needs students or academically disadvantaged students.

Advisors frequently speak at assemblies for middle school students to introduce them to vocational/technical education and work opportunities. They also give presentations for exploratory classes. Some schools have asked their advisors to publicize employment potential in slide or film presentations developed for recruitment purposes. Colleges can recruit secondary vocational students in this manner as well.

Advisory committees arrange for occupationally related field trips and other activities. Advisors often open their plants for class tours or observations of the actual operation of a business. Sometimes they allow brief hands-on demonstrations to give students a glimpse of how it would be to do this kind of work.

Advisory committees inform the school of opportunities to place students in full- or part-time jobs or co-op positions. At the secondary level, vocational/technical students especially welcome the chance to try out their new skills and make some money while still in school; when they graduate, they want jobs related to their training. Advisors are aware of job openings, both in their own shops and in those of their colleagues, and can pass this information on to the school's instructional and placement staff. They can also

advise teachers and students of the pay scale to expect upon graduation and of further training available.

Advisory committees inform employers of the availability of trained vocational/technical students. People with no direct link to vocational/technical schools are often totally unaware of the talent that may be available. Helping to publicize the school in this way may, in turn, generate donations and other forms of support and, of course, enlarge the membership of advisory committees.

Advisory committees support student vocational/technical organizations. Advisors serve as judges for competitions and often donate scholarships, awards, or prizes to the top students. Winning a complete tool set can be a valuable incentive for vocational/technical students looking for their first job after graduation.

...GENERATE POSITIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advisory committees help acquaint the community with the needs of vocational/technical education. Advisors can be the school's most effective spokespersons with political groups — not only the school board, but planning boards as well. The views of prominent business leaders tend to carry considerable weight with these policymakers.

Advisors speak to trade or community organizations about their work with vocational/technical programs. Sometimes they place articles in their company or trade newsletters. These public relations activities, in turn, may initiate stories in local print and broadcast media that reflect favorably on both the education institution and the advisors themselves. On occasion, a committee may generate a video showing the vocational program with student work displayed.

Advisory committees seek legislative support for vocational/technical programs. Advisors who are community leaders may have influence with state or federal legislators, and they may be able to speak on behalf of the needs of vocational/technical education generally, or of particular institutions.

Committees may raise program visibility through radio talk shows, displaying student work in their places of business, and in other creative ways. They may even raise funds in this manner.

...ASSIST WITH PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Advisory committees help vocational/technical schools plan and implement new programs. As noted above, advisors sometimes generate ideas for new vocational/technical programs. In addition, advisors can also be closely involved in the actual planning and implementating of those programs. The general advisory council must endorse local plans as reflected in the program application for state and federal funds.

Advisory committees help schools set priorities for budgetary expenditures. When resources are limited, advisors help vocational/technical administrators use their available resources to maximum advantage.

Advisory committees advise schools on trends in the local job market. Advisors from business and industry are in an ideal position to foresee where their own industries are headed and how advances in technology will affect the labor market. Vocational/ technical programs can thus capitalize on advisors' insights and knowledge by preparing for shifts in demand for certain types of workers. Representatives from industries other than those of committee members can be invited to share their insights as well.

Advisory committees help schools evaluate the quality of their vocational/ technical programs. Assessing how well vocational/technical programs are preparing students to enter the job market can take several forms with advisors assisting in various ways. For example, schools may undertake follow-up surveys of graduates and employers to ascertain what proportion of students remain in their field upon graduation, and to measure employer satisfaction with the quality of training. Often advisors assist with these surveys by suggesting additional questions, proposing ways to encourage cooperation with employers, or reviewing survey results and recommending program changes accordingly. Other kinds of surveys may be done as well. Some advisors have suggested close monitoring of co-op placements to identify and close gaps between the school's training and the needs of employers; with early detection of problems, a school can thus modify a program quickly to benefit current enrollees. And still other advisors have assisted educators by serving as on-site evaluators for evaluations conducted by the Alabama Department of Education.

Advisory committees often review enrollment trends to suggest ways to bolster enrollment in a needed program through scholarships, videos, writeups, and the like.

Advisory committee members can participate in the team reviews of their local programs done periodically by the State Department of Education. By documenting such things as survey results, involvement in planning, and support of the vocational/technical program, the evaluation of the local or institutional program can proceed much smoother. Being available for discussion with the review team is also helpful.

The general advisory council should have participated in the development of the "local application" and have indicated as much by signing that document. This is an excellent opportunity for committees and councils to bring their recommendations to the attention of state officials. Another opportunity to do so is with an annual report to the board or college administration which some committees do.

Program advisory committees and general advisory councils can often establish liaison with nearby community organizations as well as school-based groups — community education, local employment offices, assessment centers, vocational rehabilitation centers, and the like.

Finally, local advisory committees should consider meeting jointly with neighboring school or institutional committees to develop a collaborative spirit and perhaps formal articulation agreements. In some cases, regional advisory councils involving a city and county school system and the local two-year college have been fruitful.

Structural Features of Advisory Committees

There is a necessary and assumed relationship between schools, vocational programs, advisory committees/councils and the business community. Exhibit 1 illustrates this relationship, showing how program and general advisory committees link the school with the larger community.

Two organizational structures are possible to accommodate counties or district school systems with a single Area Vocational Center serving one or more high schools and large urban school systems with multiple comprehensive high schools and/or Area Vocational Centers.

The smaller school system or Area Vocational Center may have a council representative of their programs, teachers, parents, students and related businesses. In a large urban school system, a service area committee may be representative of teachers, parents, students, related agencies, business and labor within a vocational service area. Representatives or chairs from each Service Area or Program Advisory Committee would serve on the larger district-wide Advisory Council which will include all vocational service areas.

There must be a continuous and meaningful exchange of information and dialogue to maintain a free-flowing, honest communication among all participants in the system. The resources of each advisory committee/council should not be limited to those represented in the organized body but include other community and private sector organizations which can be utilized.

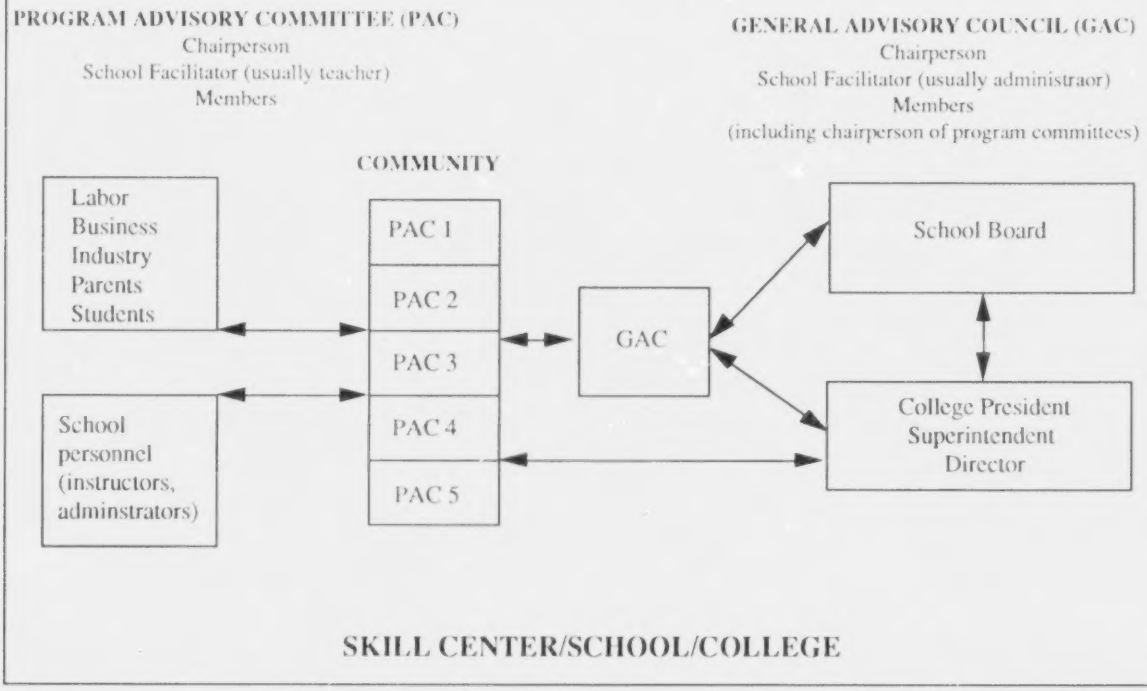
The arrows in the exhibit depict the two-way dialogue between advisory committees, school personnel, and the school board or college administration. As a general rule, program advisory committees submit their recommendations to the general advisory council who, in turn, make recommendations to school administrators and the local school board or college. School personnel should report back to advisory committees on their decisions.

Although this manual is devoted to the work of program advisory committees and general advisory councils for vocational /technical programs, it is important to note that there are other avenues for private sector involvement in local education. Private Industry Councils (PICs) are an example of an ongoing effort to involve the larger community in some aspect of their local schools. Individuals who serve on vocational/technical advisory committees may also participate in these or other activities that benefit the school. It may be helpful for schools to develop their own organizational charts or other graphic presentations of the various links between the delivery systems represented by the area skill center, two-year colleges and schools with the community at large.

This chapter discusses the ways in which program advisory committees and general advisory councils are organized and explains the roles of the key individuals involved. It also describes the interactions between advisory committees and other components of the education community.

EXHIBIT 1

ADVISORY COMMITTEES ARE THE LINK BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNNITY



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL

THE CHAIRPERSON

Each program advisory committee and general advisory council must elect or appoint a chairperson from its membership. The chairperson should be from the private sector. It is this person's responsibility to work with the school facilitator to develop agendas and manage meetings.

Program or service area advisory committee chairs may also be members of the general advisory council. As such, they convey the concerns or recommendations of their committees to the larger entity, and in turn provide feedback on the results of general advisory council meetings.

THE FACILITATOR

A representative of the school, center, or college serves as facilitator to advisory committees. In general, this individual conveys the concerns or priorities of the school to the general advisory council and assists each to carry out its mission. He or she is not a voting member, but rather a liaison between the school and the advisory committee or council. The facilitator may be the program teacher or department head for a program advisory committee.

Facilitators of advisory committees play a major role in ensuring the success of their committees. They are sometimes asked to gather data to assist the committees in their reviews (e.g., enrollment or placement records; student assessment and test scores). They also coordinate the logistics of committee meetings (mailing invitations and agendas; taking minutes and overseeing their distribution). Perhaps most important, facilitators serve as a conduit of information between the advisory committees and their colleagues on the instructional staff. It is this free flow of communication that guarantees that the advisory committee's work will be most beneficial to the program. Exhibit 2 lists the responsibilities of facilitators of program advisory committees.

THE VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL ADMINISTRATOR

The school director, vocational-technical director or college technical dean lays the groundwork for effective use of advisory committees. The administrator's perspective sets the tone for the entire school: where the administrator places a high value on advisory committees, so will the teachers, and, in turn, the committee members themselves. How can vocational/technical administrators convey their high regard for advisory committees?

- by personally attending general advisory council and program advisory committee meetings whenever possible;
- by setting aside funds in the school budget to provide refreshments and an annual banquet for advisory committee members;

EXHIBIT 2

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR OF PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

In planning and conducting meetings of the committee, the facilitator:

1. Meets with the committee in planning the annual program of work.
2. Mails invitations, agendas, and necessary materials in advance of the meetings to members, ex officio members, and guests.
3. Provides necessary materials (paper, pencils, agendas, a list of members, file folders, file space, refreshments, etc.) to members at meetings.
4. Introduces members to one another.
5. Guides the committee in electing a chairperson and other officers specified in the operating rules.
6. Guides the committee in developing and adopting a set of operating rules.
7. Assists the committee in planning the annual program of work.
8. Provides background information on vocational-technical program objectives, activities, and long-range plans for improvement.
9. Maintains close communication among the committee, instructional staff, and school administration.
10. Assists the committee in preparing minutes of its meetings and other reports, as appropriate.

EXHIBIT 3

SUGGESTED RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF ASSIGNED TO MANAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND/OR COUNCILS

In planning and conducting meetings of the committee, the facilitator:

1. Establish continuity and uniformity among program committees.
2. Diversify and improve committee memberships where needed.
3. Establish student representation at, and/or participation in, advisory committee meetings.
4. Aid in scheduling and planning agendas for the general advisory committee, and coordinate these activities with the superintendent or vocational-technical dean.
5. Find and utilize methods to improve communications among the school board/college administrator, industry, school administration, advisory committees, staff and students.
6. Develop and revise schoolwide guidelines for conducting program advisory committee meetings.
7. Create and develop a resource library, and conduct in-house training in running successful advisory committee activities.
8. Host at least two general advisory council meetings per year and one may be an appreciation meeting.
9. Attend selected program advisory committee meetings to support newly elected chairpersons and coach them, when asked to do so.
10. Establish records for each program and its activities; summarize accomplishments and cite future objectives for the superintendent or technical dean and school board.
11. Monitor program advisory committees' progress by use of yearly evaluations.

- by including teacher participation in advisory committee activities as part of their professional development responsibility;
- by delegating responsibility for all advisory committee functions to a staff person, compensating him or her for the extra duties. Exhibit 3 is a proposed job description for such an individual.

REPORTING PROTOCOLS

Program advisory committee reports are submitted to the general advisory council, which may identify problems or make suggestions common to several program areas and adopt them for its own consideration. Recommendations that pertain solely to a single program may be submitted directly by the program advisory committee to the vocational/technical administrator, to the school board, or to both, as well as through the general advisory council. Procedures should be established to guide this information flow so that recommendations do not fall through the cracks.

Advisory committee reports to the school boards and/or college administration may be presented orally or in writing, or both. Feedback from the vocational/technical director on specific recommendations should go by way of the general advisory council to the program or service area committee.

SETTING POLICY

Some vocational/technical administrators recommend working with the school board or college administration in development of official policies governing the establishment and management of program advisory committees and general advisory councils within a school district or college.

The primary reason for having formal policies or bylaws is to ensure continuity in how advisory committees are created and maintained. If responsibility for managing advisory committees should change hands within the school, there will be a reference to guide newcomers. Formal policies provide an important foundation if there are challenges to the process. Policies or bylaws governing advisory committees or councils might contain the following elements:

- the stated purpose of the policy (or bylaws);
- definition of the advisory committee/council;
- membership requirements (including overall composition, method of appointment, and term of service, where appropriate);
- rules for electing committee officers, and definitions of their duties;
- guidelines for frequency and timing of meetings;
- reporting requirements;

- functions of the advisory committee/council; and
- procedures for amending the policy or bylaws.

Exhibit 4 provides an example of organizational bylaws governing vocational/technical advisory committees/councils.

EXHIBIT 4

ORGANIZATIONAL BYLAWS FOR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES

School District / Institution

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1. The named program advisory committee for vocational/technical education shall exist only during such time as it may be authorized to serve by the duly constituted school board or college administration.

Section 2. The purposes and duties of the named program advisory committee shall be to:

a. assess the needs of the community as related to vocational/technical education program offerings;
b. formulate recommendations for the improvement of vocational/technical education instruction and facilities;
c. assess program and course offerings as related to objectives;
d. assist in the articulation of vocational/technical education program(s) offered by the school with employment opportunities;
e. assist in the development of long-range goals for vocational/technical education within the school district;
f. advise on the revision of objectives for program(s) as warranted by study and/or evaluation;
g. serve as an avenue of communication between education and the world of work;
h. evaluate annually the progress made toward established goals; and
i. other:

ARTICLE II: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Appointments to the program advisory committee shall be made by (appointing group).

Section 2. The program advisory committee shall consist of a minimum of members and ex officio members.

Section 3. The program advisory committee membership shall be selected as representative of the following in the area or region served:

a. geographical sections of the school district(s) or region;
b. types of businesses and industries;
c. parents and students;
d. occupational representation;
e. minorities;
f. male and female; and
g. special-needs groups.

Section 4. The term of appointment for members shall begin on _____

Section 5. Members shall be appointed for one-year renewable terms.

ARTICLE III. LEADERSHIP

Section 1. The officers of the committee shall be the chairperson, vice chairperson, and other such officers as may be required.

Section 2. The election of officers shall be at the (month) meeting each year. The members shall be elected by a majority vote of the committee membership.

Section 3. Chairperson. The chairperson shall be elected by the committee members. The chairperson shall:

a. preside at all committee meetings;
b. appoint special subcommittees as the need arises;
c. work closely with the school staff and administration in organizing committee activities; and
d. represent the program advisory committee at all meetings of the general advisory council.

Section 4. Vice chairperson. The vice chairperson shall perform the duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.

Section 5. Facilitator. The facilitator shall:

a. keep records of attendance;
b. disseminate and organize minutes, meeting notices, agendas, and other documents; and
c. maintain a permanent record of all committee activities.

Section 6. Staff. A staff person(s) shall be assigned the responsibility of being the facilitator for the program advisory committee within the school. This person will work closely with the committee chairperson in providing necessary leadership, but will not have a vote in committee deliberations.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

Section 1. _____ regular and/or special meetings of the program committee shall be held during the year.

Section 2. Written notices of committee meetings shall be mailed to all members at least (number) days before each meeting.

Section 3. Meetings shall be no more than _____ hours in length unless such meetings are continued by the vote of committee membership.

Section 4. Agendas shall be prepared and disseminated by (facilitator).

Section 5. Standing or special subcommittees shall be appointed by the chairperson as the need arises.

ARTICLE V. ANNUAL PROGRAM

Section 1. The program advisory committee shall plan and function under an annual program of work.

Section 2. The program of work for each ensuing year will be discussed and approved during the (month) meeting each year.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of active members at any regular committee meeting, provided that notice of such proposed change has been included in the call of the meeting.

Adapted from *Handbook for Local or Regional Technical Committees for Vocational Technical Education*, Connecticut State Council on Vocational/Technical Education. Hartford, 1986, pp.9-12

Recruiting Advisory Committee Members

The *Alabama Vocational Education Standards* offer important guidelines for the composition of program advisory committees as well as general advisory councils. Specifically, each local vocational education advisory committee should:

- be appointed/approved by the local school board /superintendent/ director or college administration;
- consist of representatives of local business and industry, organized labor, government, and education;
- include representatives of minorities; and
- not contain members of the school board, college administration, or other school officials except on an ex-officio basis.

In establishing program advisory committees, schools must consider not only the needs of their vocational/technical programs, but also the motivations of potential advisors. Advisory committees are most effective when interests are shared between the members and the school. This chapter discusses how to assess the range of representation and characteristics of a good advisory committee. It also offers tips for recruiting new members and reinforcing their contributions to the program.

How large should the committee be?

A literal reading of the standards suggests advisors from business and industry, organized labor, government, and agriculture. Most effective committees appear to have more than six members, and some have as many as fifteen. Larger committees can provide better representation of the local business community, and they ensure sufficient turnout at meetings so that important decisions can be made. One factor in determining the size of your committee may be the number of occupation-related businesses in your community.

Prospective advisors, job placements, and other training opportunities may come from businesses within easy commuting distance.

REVIEW PROGRAM STATUS

Regardless of the philosophy about the optimal size of advisory committees, there is a perennial need for "fresh blood" to stimulate and strengthen the work of the committee. Thus, the search for new advisors is ongoing. Vocational/technical school administrators and instructors must always be alert for opportunities to expand or improve committee membership.

Building a strong advisory committee depends, to some extent, on the current status of your program and the existing committee.

When starting a new vocational/technical program you will have a clean slate and an opportunity to draw from all the available resources of talent and skill in your community. The challenge is to identify and organize a group of people whose expertise and enthusiasm can inspire and motivate the development of a top-quality program.

Strive to recruit advisory committee members who are extremely enthusiastic in shaping the new program; identifying needed equipment, explaining state licensing regulations, and assessing employment trends.

When rebuilding or revitalizing an existing committee, the first step is to evaluate the composition, strengths, and weaknesses of your current membership.

When selecting prospective membership, it should be remembered that each community has a power structure made up of civic, government and business leaders. To a certain extent, these individuals are usually consulted on important decisions impacting on the community at large. Selection of council representation should include these community leaders. The council should also include minority group leaders and leaders of civic organizations or other institutions serving the community. If possible, the membership should be geographically representative, representative of various occupational and administrative levels (i.e., professional, technical, skilled, and semi-skilled, presidents, vice-presidents, and hourly employees), and include both male and female members.

Maintaining an up-to-date roster of committee membership makes it easy to identify the personal characteristics and organizational affiliations of each advisor. Several schools keep computer files of their advisory committee members, their work and home addresses and telephone numbers, and their tenure on the committee. These files can be updated easily as advisors move their residences or businesses, or as new members are recruited and inactive members are replaced. Exhibit 5 presents a sample form used for this purpose.

EXHIBIT 5

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER INFORMATION FORM

DEPARTMENT _____ DATE _____

NAME _____

EMPLOYMENT ADDRESS: ☐ check if you want mail sent to your office

Company name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

HOME ADDRESS: ☐ check if you want mail sent to your home

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

What does your program need?

Are the curriculum and equipment outdated? Reviewing professional activities and affiliations of instructional staff can prove helpful in identifying both the needs of the program and the parallel needs for advisors who keep current in their fields.

Are there problems recruiting students or placing graduates? Statistics on recruitment and placement can be displayed graphically to reveal historical and projected trends. Similar data should be available from industry, employment, and population trends in your community. If problems in recruitment or placement are revealed, your program could benefit from having the input of a professional personnel administrator or career counselor on the advisory committee.

Not everyone is suited for the career for which they are preparing. Students who find employment difficult in the occupation for which they were trained may be successfully employed in a related career. To help identify employment trends in these related fields, some schools have expanded their advisory committees to include representatives of these industries, personnel managers from large companies, and representatives of the Alabama Division of Employment Security.

What are the school's long range goals? Written plans developed by a school's administration often identify glaring needs for help in adapting vocational/

technical programs to fit the larger picture of improvement and expansion in the future. Advisory committee members from progressive companies can help to guide the program on a parallel course with industry trends.

Are some members losing interest? Are their ideas getting stale?

Advisors should be encouraged to serve as long as they remain interested and active. They should be appointed for a one to three year term of service, which can be renewed indefinitely or terminated when interest diminishes.

There are two ways of assessing advisors' level of interest in their work on the committee. One is to ask them directly, for example, by sending a form to advisors at the end of each school year to ascertain whether they intend to continue (see Exhibit 6). The second method relies upon indirect indicators of interest: keeping attendance profiles for committee meetings to assess members' record of participation and reviewing minutes to assess contributions made by individual committee members.

Other tips for evaluating the overall effectiveness of advisory committees are provided in "Evaluating Committee Effectiveness."

EXHIBIT 6

FORM SOLICITING CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP

Please Circle One:

1. I *do/do not* wish to continue as an advisory committee member. If you do not wish to continue, why not?

2. The present time/format (e.g., 12:00 noon/luncheon format) *is/is not* acceptable.
   If it is not acceptable, please recommend another time/format.

3. The number of meetings *is/is not* acceptable.
   If it is not acceptable, please make a recommendation.

4. The present location *is/is not* acceptable.
   If it is not acceptable, please recommend another location:

5. I cannot attend meetings, but I will still be available for the school to contact as needed. *Yes/No*

6. Other comments, criticisms, recommendations (new members?):

   Name _____

   Company/Firm _____

   Date _____

RECRUITING POTENTIAL ADVISORS

When recruiting potential advisors, you will find it helpful to keep in mind the reasons that busy people choose to volunteer their time. That way, you can appeal to these motives when you solicit members for your committee.There are probably as many motives for serving on advisory committees as there are people who do it. People choose to be advisors because:

- they consider it a personal challenge to see what they can accomplish for the school;
- they have a genuine desire to help students achieve, or to return to the school what they received as students;
- they are concerned about the quality of vocational/ technical education;
- they welcome the opportunity for networking with their colleagues in the context of advisory committee meetings;
- they want to add evidence of "civic responsibility" to their resume;
- they want first choice to employ top graduates of the program; and
- they want some good publicity for themselves and their businesses.

What are the qualities of a good advisor? How can you identify people who will make positive contributions to your program? Time, energy, and knowledge of industry trends are perhaps the most critical characteristics.

When recruiting advisory committee members, be explicit about the time requirements, and explore the candidate's availability to serve in a less formal capacity. Prospective advisors should be aware of how many committee meetings will be scheduled, at what time of day, and for how long. Some people might lack the time to attend formal meetings but be more than willing to consult by telephone and pitch in as needed.

Some advisors are very helpful when supplies run low in a shop. The advisor may not always have the materials on hand, but often directs the school to other sources or makes the initial contacts personally. This individual rarely attends meetings, yet makes invaluable contributions to the program nevertheless.

Effective advisors are people who stay in the forefront of change in their industry. Retired auto-body repair workers may have an abundance of time and energy, but the committee needs members who are knowledgeable about unibody construction as well. Similarly, drafting committees need to include members who have CAD/CAM experience.

Should you recruit chief executive officers (CEOs) or look to representatives of the rank and file? The answer depends partly on where your program currently stands. Establishing a new program or rejuvenating a weak, yet valuable one, may require the combined efforts of individuals who command respect and have a certain amount of clout in the business community. A long-standing program may need periodic infusions of new technology or methods, which are more likely to come from people who are working directly in the field.

CEOs may look impressive on the roster of advisory committee members, but they are also busy people who may not be able to devote the time and energy to building a strong vocational/technical program. Some schools encourage CEOs to volunteer the services of selected employees to fulfill the advisory role in their place. Such designees are usually sharp, motivated people (to have been noticed by the CEO in the first place); they may also be able to gain the ear of the CEO if there is a need for additional resources or input from a higher level.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR ADVISORS?

Good advisors can come from many sectors of the community.Where you look for potential advisors depends, first, on whether your program is new or established, and, second, on the type of individuals you need.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Especially when you are starting a new committee, contact the chamber of commerce for lists of businesses in the particular trade. Directories of area businesses, including local Yellow Pages, can also be helpful. The following organizations can be helpful: the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), Alabama Employment Services, and local colleges and technical institutions.

These sources usually include information on the size of each company, the occupational areas involved, and the number of employees. Such data are helpful in determining an appropriate mix of business and industry advisors. For example, "progressive" companies are likely sources of good advisors, but keep in mind the proportion of jobs available within these organizations or their counterparts in nearby communities. Your committee should include representatives of businesses relying on traditional practices as well.

For committees serving well-established programs, most vocational/technical directors look first within their own schools for recommendations of new advisors. Administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and co-op coordinators all have contacts with the business sector and should be able to name several promising candidates. Current advisory committee members may be

able to recommend colleagues. Teachers and advisors from other schools with similar programs are likely to have additional contacts in your community.

Employers of program graduates or of co-op students can make good program advisors, provided that they have a genuine interest in improving the program overall, not just in refining it to meet their own particular needs. Vocational/technical directors suggest following up on student placements (whether in jobs or on co-op) to assess the employer's relationship with the students and the quality of the on-the-job training. These are good clues to the individual's commitment to vocational/technical education.

Graduates of vocational/technical programs are often delighted to serve on advisory committees. Many enjoy maintaining contacts with schools and welcome the chance to help other students succeed. Some may have teaching in mind as a future occupation and wish to learn more about vocational/technical education. Program graduates also serve as positive role models for students who are currently enrolled in the program.

Finally, vendors of supplies and equipment for the program often develop a genuine interest in it because of their on-going contacts. These individuals are well aware of occupational trends and can offer valuable information input as advisory committee members. However, as a matter of caution, avoid getting into a conflict of interest situation.

LABOR REPRESENTATIVES

Two important resources for recruiting labor representatives are the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees, set up for each trade area, local unions, and trade union associations. Each is listed in the telephone directory or can be located through the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT), listed under the U.S. Department of Labor, or through the State Division of Employment Security. Another source is the Human Resources Development Institute of the AFL-CIO.

MINORITY OR SPECIAL-NEEDS REPRESENTATIVES

If you are seeking a representative of a minority or special-needs population, community-based organizations or associations are an additional source to identify members who are working in specific occupations. Important contacts are the local chapters of the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Puerto Rican Forum, Indian Councils, Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Jobs in Industry (working to place the disabled in the private sector), and the Private Industry Councils (PICs) of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which can also be asked to point to several members who own or operate businesses in related industries. Although these organizations may not necessarily have employment or vocational/technical education as their primary mission, principals of

these groups can often identify colleagues who work in specific trades or industries.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

If there is student representation, two suggested methods of selecting the advisory committee's student member could be: 1) Holding elections among the students in the program; this may be accomplished in tandem with the election of class officers; or 2) allowing instructors to select the student of their choice. This does not always mean a student who excels in the program, but rather a reasonably good student who is thoughtful, willing to speak out (especially among adults), and respected by fellow students.

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

If there is parental representation on the committee, they should be the parents of a vocational student. Some schools prefer, wherever possible, to invite parents who are themselves employed in the occupational area. Above all, the parent member should be interested in the vocational/technical training provided by the school and willing to voice issues and concerns.

THE LOGISTICS OF RECRUITMENT

There are four ways to recruit advisors:

- by requesting volunteers;
- by soliciting nominations and selecting committee members through appointment or election;
- by selecting individuals directly; and
- by using a selection committee.

The method you use depends largely on whether you have already targeted specific individuals for your committee.

Soliciting volunteers may be a good method for organizing a new committee in a field where local leaders are not known to the school. Some schools have even advertised in the local newspaper for prospective advisory committee members. Be advised, however, that a fairly structured screening system should be prepared to sort through the range of responses that are likely to result.

Sending letters to business associations or community organizations and soliciting nominations from their memberships can also be an effective approach to recruitment (see Exhibit 7). Letters should always be followed up with telephone calls to the president or director of the association.

Once potential advisors are identified, recruiting them for committee membership may entail a formal process. For example:

Step 1: The names of prospective advisors are solicited.

Step 2: Lead teachers fill out a form (see Exhibit 8) to provide information supporting each nomination. The vocational/technical administrator verifies this information by making a few phone calls, for example, to the candidates and their employers.

Step 3: The vocational/technical administrator sends candidates an invitation (Exhibit 9) and a letter of intent (Exhibit 10) to complete and return if they are interested in serving on the committee.

Step 4: The vocational/technical administrator summarizes all the available data on a recommendation form (see Exhibit 11) that is submitted with a signed letter of intent to the school superintendent or college official.

Step 5: If the superintendent or dean of instruction approves the nomination, he or she may submit the letter of intent to the school board, which formally appoints the advisor to a specified term.

Step 6: The vocational/technical administrator sends letters to the new advisors confirming their membership in the committee (see Exhibit 12).

Personal telephone contacts with prospective advisors are another popular approach to recruiting. Co-op coordinators and guidance counselors, in particular, are constantly in the field and have many opportunities to solicit potential advisory committee members. Many vocational/technical personnel credit the "personal touch" with acquiring some of their most valuable advisors. Verbal agreements should, of course, be confirmed in writing for your records.

Another method frequently used for nominating prospective advisory council members is through the use of a selection committee. Proper use of an independent selection committee eliminates membership committed only to the school viewpoint and will reflect varied opinions of the community.

A selection committee is composed of two or three respected individuals from the community and the school representative. Following guidelines for community representation and member qualifications which have been approved by the school administrator, the selection committee seeks advisory council nominees from throughout the community. The committee then reviews and screens prospective members and presents a list of nominees to the local vocational administrator.

EXHIBIT 7

LETTER SOLICITING NOMINATIONS

Dear [President/Director]:

The _____ program at _____ school is trying to identify leaders in the business community who will help us develop a vocational-technical program that is both reflective of and responsive to the needs of local industry.

We are asking you to draw on your knowledge of ___(occupational area)_____ in our community and identify individuals who are (1) current with emerging trends and (2) concerned about the education and training of workers entering this field. Our goal is to establish a volunteer advisory committee that will meet _____ times during the school year to review employment trends, recommend needed equipment, examine the curriculum, and generally advise our instructional staff on how best to prepare students for entry-level positions in ___(occupational area)_____.

I will call you next week to answer any questions you may have and to solicit your nominations for advisory committee members.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

EXHIBIT 8

RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATE

TO: (Vocational-Technical Director) DATE: _____

FROM: (Teacher Name) _____

CANDIDATE: _____

1. What uniquely qualifies this person to serve on this Program Advisory Committee?

2. What strength or particular expertise does this person bring to the Program Advisory Committee?

3. In which of the following areas does this person have strengths, and why? Check any that apply.

   a. job placements
   b. field trips
   c. curriculum development
   d. surplus materials and donations
   e. community relations

4. Other comments:

EXHIBIT 9

LETTER INVITING A POSSIBLE CANDIDATE

Dear _____

The (school) is committed to excellence in its vocational-technical programs. To help us achieve this aim, we reach out to leaders in business, industry, and labor, and to parents and students, and ask them to work with us as advisors in improving our curriculum and facilities for students in (town) .

Your name has been suggested for possible membership on our Advisory Committee. By participating in this committee, you will have an opportunity to guide the (school) in preparing students for entry-level jobs in (field) .

The Advisory Committee meets times each school year. Meetings are usually held (time and location) . In addition, our instructional staff occasionally calls upon advisors informally, as the need arises.

If you are interested in serving on this committee, please complete the attached Letter of Intent and return it to me at your earliest convenience. Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

EXHIBIT 10

LETTER OF INTENT

Dear (Vocational Technical Director)

I, ,wish to become a member of the

Program Advisory Committee at

Home address:

Business address:
Title:

Phone:

Phone:

Below is a brief summary of my professional background:
Total number of years in occupational area?

Brief summany of relevant experience:

Signature
Date

EXHIBIT 11

RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATE TO (PROGRAM NAME) PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO: _____ DATE:

FROM: (Vocational-Technical Director)

CANDIDATE:

COMMENTS:

EXHIBIT 12

LETTER CONFIRMING MEMBERSHIP

Dear

I am pleased to inform you that the school board has accepted your membership in the _____ Program Advisory Committee for the next school year.

Enclosed for your information are some materials to explain the goals and objectives of our school, the _____ program, and your role as a program advisor. I will be contacting you soon,when our first Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled.

Your experience and expertise will help us provide the best and most up-to-date training, so necessary for a student's successful transition to work. I appreciate your interest in our prog m, and I look forward to working with you.

The list of nominees presented to the Local Education Agency (LEA) should be a final slate of individuals selected by the selection committee and recommended by the school administrator. By being presented a final list of recommended names the LEA is not forced to consider alternatives or to make unnecessary decisions concerning the candidacy of any individual. This approach also makes it possible for the LEA to approve the appointment of all members at the same time. Exhibit 13 provides a convenient form for nominating a slate of advisory committee members.

EXHIBIT 13

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER NOMINATION FORM

DATE FILED _____ NOMINATION FORM FOR (school year) _____

ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN _____

PERSON(full name and job title/description)	Business Address and phone number	Home Address and phone number
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

FACILITATOR _____

ORIENTING NEW ADVISORS TO THEIR ROLES

New advisors will need some orientation to the world of vocational/technical education and their role in it.Many schools have developed packages of introductory materials that may include:

- a copy of the Alabama Vocational Education Standards;
- a general brochure on the school/college's vocational/technical programs;
- the bylaws of the vocational advisory committee or a policy of the school board, superintendent-director or college regarding program and general advisory committees;
- written descriptions of the school's expectations of its advisory committees; and
- sample reports prepared by past advisory committees.

By providing new advisors with written "job descriptions," schools can lay the ground rules for effective participation, explicitly identifying activities that may or may not be appropriate. (see Exhibit 14)

HOW TO THANK YOUR ADVISORS

Educators should recognize the contributions of their advisory committee members in a variety of ways:

- by sending letters of appreciation (see Exhibit 15);
- by presenting them with plaques or printed certificates of appreciation;
- by giving them identification or membership cards that allow them to attend school functions such as athletic events or special programs;
- by inviting them to at least one formal dinner each year;
- by including photographs of advisory committee members in the school yearbook; and
- by generating media stories about the work of advisory committees.

Even inactive members can be politely thanked for their contributions in a way that leaves them free to exit gracefully from their obligations to the school. Several schools have developed diplomatic letters for this purpose (see Exhibit 16).

Most dedicated advisory committee members, however, appear to be far less impressed by tangible expressions of gratitude than they are by personal

EXHIBIT 14

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

POSITION: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

LENGTH OF APPOINTMENT: 1-3 years

QUALIFICATIONS: Employment/Supervision in area of appointment. Available and willing to serve

ASSIGNMENT: To area of expertise, service, etc. of greatest impact

REPORTS TO: Chairperson/Local Administrator in charge

GOAL: In harmony with the local school system to conduct instructional programs that will enable students to be successful productive citizens in their elected area of study or employment

APPLICATION: By appointment, following solicitation, recruitment and/or volunteering

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY - No persons shall be denied employment RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Be able to assess the needs and interests of youth and encourage excellence within the parameters of quality principles of education.
2. To offer suggestions for an instructional program designed to develop skills, knowledge and work habits in accordance with the local and state board of education.
3. Propose instructional materials that will make teaching and learning more effective.
4. Serve as resource person to the related department in such a way as to enrich and enhance the program.
5. Act as the liaison between the educational institution and the public by providing information on a continuing basis as it relates to fund raising, bond issues, and legislative action necessary to get public support for educational programs.
6. Serve as a lobbyist for the educational program.
7. Serve as an effective public relations agent.
8. Keep educators informed of community changes that will impact the local educational process.
9. Offer help and/or suggestions for in-service activities.
10. Help secure outside revenue sources for program support and equipment purchases.
11. Oversee pertinent surveys, assess the labor and higher education market and recommend educational changes.
12. Serve and advise on curriculum, course content, program development and/or textbook selection committees in area of expertise.
13. Help tap community resource persons, facilities, equipment and field trip sites.
14. Employ and/or place students.
15. Take part in the continuous evaluation of the total education process.
16. Consult with the local school system in developing applications, as required, for the local department to acquire funds.
17. Assist with annual and long range planning.
18. Share positive suggestions for equipment and facilities.
19. Intend to and be able to prepare for, attend, and participate in committee meetings.

feelings of accomplishment. For this reason, vocational/technical administrators should take special care to ensure that advisors get frequent feedback — whether informally or in written reports — on the success of their recommendations. Without this feedback, even the most enthusiastic advisor will lose confidence in his or her effectiveness. More discussion on feedback is provided in "Organizing Advisory Committee Meetings."

EXHIBIT 15

LETTER OF RECOGNITION/RECRUITMENT

Dear

On behalf of _____ I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you for your faithful participation in our Advisory Committee activities during the past school year. Your contributions were invaluable, and resulted in numerous program and curriculum improvements .
_____ (list several examples) _____
The vocational-technical students and faculty who benefited directly from these improvements also wish to express their thanks to you, and encourage your continued support and service.

At this time I am in the process of organizing the committee for the coming school year. I encourage you to remain as an active Advisory Committee member and continue to share with us your thoughts and expertise.

Sincerely,

FXHIBIT 16

LETTER TO AN INACTIVE MEMBER

Dear

On behalf of the ___(program and school)_____ , I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to you for serving as a member of our Advisory Committee.

The ____(program)_____ has benefited greatly from the work of your committee. I realize, however, that our advisors are very busy, with many competing demands on their time, and I am grateful for your interest and involvement over the past _____ year(s).

Organizing Advisory Committee Meetings

Schools in Alabama are free to schedule and manage their advisory committee meetings within the limited constraints of the AlabamaVocational Education Standards, however, both program advisory committees and general advisory councils must meet at least semiannually.

This chapter reviews several alternative approaches to organizing advisory committee meetings.

WHEN SHOULD ADVISORY COMMITTEES MEET?

TIME OF YEAR

Two meetings per school year are required. Most active committees meet more often, some as frequently as every month. However, meetings should not be called simply for the sake of holding a meeting. There should always be some business to discuss.

General Advisory Councils

A common approach to scheduling general advisory council meetings is to sponsor fall and spring meetings. Sometimes at these meetings the chair of each program advisory committee presents a report; alternatively, the general advisory council chairperson delivers a comprehensive report.

Program Advisory Committees

Program advisory committee meetings are usually scheduled as convenient throughout the school year. Some schools reserve the option to call ad hoc meetings when the need arises — for example, when grant applications are being submitted and advisors' input is desired.

An alternative model is to include all program advisory committee members in

at least one general meeting each year. After the business meeting is conducted and the dinner is served, members break up into respective program areas for their program advisory committee meetings. A suggested sequence for meetings might be:

1. Orientation
2. Meet with teachers
3. Combined committees/council
4. Recommendations

A banquet might be held every other year.

Exhibit 17 shows a form used by one school to facilitate scheduling of program advisory committee meetings.

EXHIBIT 17

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

DEPARTMENT

MTG.	DATE	TIME	PLACE
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Staff Note: Number of meetings to be held.

- Recommended 3 per school year.
- This schedule is due in the central office the last day of October each school year.

Which Comes First?

There are two opinions on the more effective sequence of general advisory council and program advisory committee meetings. One advocates holding the general advisory council meeting first, to set priorities for the program advisory committees to consider; the second prefers to hold program advisory committee meetings first, so that the general advisory council can review the minutes to identify issues that appear to cross program areas and therefore warrant their attention. Exhibit 18 shows how one school times its general advisory council and program advisory committee meetings to coincide with the school board's budget and planning process.

TIME OF DAY

The best time of day for program advisory committee meetings depends on the calendars of those who must attend, whether advisors, instructors, administrators, or other guests. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and evening meetings have all been scheduled by schools within the state. Each time has certain advantages: Daytime meetings allow advisors to visit their respective shop areas and observe students at work. Evening meeting can be held in the shop area, where advisors can examine equipment, materials, and textbooks. Some schools

EXHIBIT 18

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES

The general schedule of school planning and evaluation is shown in column A below. A sample coordinated activity schedule for advisory committees is shown in columns B and C.

	Column A School Schedule	Column B Program Advisory Committee	Column C General Advisory Council
Fall	a. Final staff planning for school year. b. Teachers file nomination forms for Program Committees	a. Hold first meeting of school year. b. Establish meeting plan(agenda items) and schedule for full year. c. Refer any items to General Advisory Council	
Winter	Staff emphasis on planning for co-curricular club activities and upcoming voc-ed week activities.		Hold first meeting of school year with Program Committee chairpersons having the opportunity to offer advice .
Spring	a. Program and staff evaluations underway in each department.	Hold one or more additional meetings to address major issues. Limit time demands to a maximum of one meeting per month	Hold second meeting if a major topic is defined by committee membe.s or the superintendent.
Summer	Initial planning for the school year beyond the next school year.	a. Final meeting for current school year. b. Elect chairperson and vice-chairperson for next school year. c. Conduct initial review of budget needs for department. d. Determine committee membership for next school year.	a. Final meeting for current school year. b. General business and appreciation activities

schedule one evening meeting and one lunchtime meeting each year.

Most advisory committee meetings are scheduled to run between one and three hours, but evening meetings in particular may continue for as long as the advisors care to stay.

Advisory committees almost always meet at the school, but there are exceptions. Occasionally, advisory committees may meet at a local restaurant or at the company facilities of an advisory committee member. The most important criterion in selecting the location is convenience to committee members.

Regardless of when or where the meeting is scheduled, advisors appreciate refreshments — coffee and doughnuts are perfectly adequate. Some schools set aside funds in their budgets specifically to provide for these snacks and annual dinners. Finally, contacts with the advisors need not be limited to the context of scheduled committee meetings. Most vocational/technical directors encourage frequent telephone communications with advisors and impromptu meetings as questions or opportunities arise that could benefit from the advisor's input. Bylaws should, of course, guide the committee and may contain such things as removing a non-attending member.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE MEETING?

In addition to the committee members, the facilitator, and other instructional staff in the program area, other individuals are sometimes invited to meetings. The vocational director, superintendent, or technical dean should always attend.

Others who may attend include

- other administrative personnel;
- the co-op coordinator;
- the guidance counselor;
- a school board representative;
- members of Private Industry Councils (PICs);
- State Department of Education personnel;
- guests or speakers.

Prospective advisory committee members may also be interested in observing a meeting to get a flavor of the work they will be doing if they agree to serve.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE MEETING

Advisory committee members should be notified of meetings at least three or four weeks in advance. The date should have been set at the previous meeting. Some schools begin by sending a written invitation to all advisory committee members (and any others whose presence is desired), and following up by telephone within one week of the meeting to remind advisors of the date and confirm their intent to attend. Other schools use the opposite approach: they call first and follow up with a written invitation or postcard. (Exhibit 19 provides two sample invitations.) All, however, confirm the importance of the personal contact and "memory jog" in encouraging attendance.

Along with the written invitation, many schools include a proposed agenda for the meeting. These agendas are usually prepared by the chairperson in conjunction with the committee facilitator. One reason for sending an agenda

EXHIBIT 19

PROGRAM COMMITEE MEETING INVITATIONS

Dear Committee Member:

The next Program Advisory Committee meeting will be held at the (school) on (date) . Meeting time will be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. An icebreaker will be held in the cafeteria from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. featuring hors d'oeuvres and mini-pastries with punch and coffee.

If you attended the last meeting, your program instructor has your Certificate of Appreciation and a plaque to display this well-earned award. You may pick the award up at the shop at either school during any school day. Those not picked up will be available at the (date) meeting.

If you did not attend the last meeting, your presence is extremely important at this meeting. A copy of the agenda is enclosed. To truly be effective, we feel we must give you feedback regarding your recommendations. We also need your assistance with the newly designed forms to improve communications between the school and its very important advisory board members.

Please call (school secretary) at (phone number) if you can attend the meeting, or drop the enclosed form in the mail.

We are looking forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

(School Letterhead)

Dear Program Advisory Committee Member:

We have scheduled a meeting of the Drafting Program Committee for Vocational-Technical Education to be held at (school) on (date) from time . We plan to have you visit the shop to observe the equipment and course of study. At time you will have lunch at the (school cafeteria/restaurant) .

Please telephone (school secretary) at (phone number) to inform us whether or not you plan to attend.

Sincerely,

is to spark interest in the meeting. Some committee chairs like to be fairly specific about issues they expect to address; others prefer a very general topic guide. To encourage additional input from advisors, some agendas routinely include an item for "new business"; alternatively, advisors can be asked to submit additional agenda items in advance of the meeting date.

It is the responsibility of the committee facilitator to keep detailed minutes of the meeting. (A good secretary is a definite asset!) To simplify this process, some use the agenda itself as a tool for organizing their notes; others have developed special forms for the purpose. Minutes generally include a listing of those who attended the meeting, a summary of each issue that was discussed, and any decisions or recommendations that were made. Good documentation of committee meetings can be used to support grant applications and reports to the school board. Exhibits 20 and 21 present forms used to encourage committee facilitators to report full details of their meetings.

Most schools try to have the minutes typed and distributed (usually by the school's clerical staff) within two weeks of the meeting. It is the policy of some schools to send copies of minutes to any or all of the following people (in addition to all the committee members and teachers who attended the meeting):

- committee members;
- other instructional staff in the program;
- superintendent, vocational director or technical dean;
- other administrative personnel;
- the co-op coordinator;
- the guidance counselor;
- a school board representative.

Copies of the minutes should be kept on file, either by the committee facilitator or by the school, administration, for five years for future reference and review under state reviews.

MANAGING THE MEETING

There are a number of ways to ensure a productive meeting. All rely on some form of meeting management.Many schools hold relatively informal advisory committee meetings, but they follow a routine pattern. The committee facilitator (or vocational director, technical dean, or superintendent, if they are present) may welcome the advisory committee members, distribute name tags and make sure that everyone has been introduced, and give a general overview of the purpose of the meeting before turning over control of the meeting to the

EXHIBIT 20

VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Committee

The meeting was held (month-day-year) at (location).
The following were in attendance:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____
5. _____ 6. _____
7. _____ 8. _____
9. _____ 10. _____
11. _____ 12. _____

Subject _____ Action _____

Subject _____ Action _____

Subject _____ Action _____

Date of next meeting (month-day-year) at (location).

Special notes: _____

EXHIBIT 21

VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL REPORT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE:
DEPARTMENT:
RECORDER:
PRESENT AT MEETING:

ACTION TAKEN TO RESOLVE ISSUES:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

DATE: (NEXT PLANNED MEETING)

EXHIBIT 22

CHECKLIST FOR MANAGING A MEETING EFFECTIVELY

	YES	NO
Agenda prepared		
Agenda distributed to members before meeting		
Room set up comfortably before meeting begins		
Refreshments available		
Meeting begins on time		
Purpose of the meeting and outcomes are stated and agreed upon		
All members participate in discussion		
Group follows agreed-upon decision-making process		
Items on agenda are covered		
Action items and decisions made are reviewed at end of meeting		
Work commitments and time lines are reviewed		
Group gives input on next meeting's objectives		
Meeting ends on time		

chairperson. Alternatively, the facilitator may continue to guide the committee through the agenda items, watching the clock to make sure the meeting is keeping on schedule.

In the most informal model, committee decisions or recommendations are reached by consensus. Some schools that have loosely structured meetings prefer to take votes on important issues so that the results can be recorded in the minutes.The method that works best for your committee will depend on the personalities of committee leadership and the dynamics of your group. Committee chairpersons and facilitators should, of course, consistently exercise judgement and tact in steering the committee to follow its agenda, reach decisions, and make recommendations where appropriate. Exhibit 22 presents a checklist to help committee leaders manage meetings effectively. Roberts Rules of Order is also an excellent reference.

MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS AND GETTING FEEDBACK

The end product of all advisory committee activities is a set of recommendations submitted annually to vocational/technical administrators and the school board. For best effect, these recommendations should be in writing and signed by the chairperson on behalf of the entire committee. The report should be as specific as possible, including statistics (e.g., on enrollment or employment trends; cost of new equipment) wherever appropriate to support committee findings.

Feedback on recommendations is perhaps the most important motivational tool for all who are involved in advisory committees. Advisors themselves derive great personal satisfaction from "getting a job done," and directors and instructors are encouraged when they see tangible results in their programs.

Feedback mechanisms can be direct or indirect, formal or informal. Some schools have developed formats that allow direct feedback from administrators and the school committee to the advisory committees' recommendations, as shown in Exhibit 23. Alternatively, the committee chairperson may report directly back to the committee in a written memorandum.

Other techniques used by school administrators in Alabama are letters of appreciation and verbal thanks at general advisory council and program advisory committee meetings, inserted in the minutes.

Whatever technique you select, the importance of recognizing the committees' accomplishments cannot be overstated. Even if recommendations are not acted upon, it is helpful to explain the reasons. Advisors need to know that school personnel and school board members are, at least, listening, and that their suggestions are taken seriously.

EXHIBIT 23

SUGGESTION FORM

(Please use a separate form for each suggestion.)

Name _____ Occupation _____ Date _____

I can be reached at the following address: _____

Business phone _____ Home phone _____

As a member of the Advisory Committee, I represent one or more of the following groups (please circle):

business/industry/organized labor parent student government agriculture

1. As a member of the Advisory Committee, I request that the following idea be given serious consideration:

2. Department head and teacher input relative to the above suggestion: Please respond in writing on this form; use the back of this sheet if more space is required. A copy of your response will be returned to the Advisory Committee member making the suggestion. Please sign or initial your input.

3. The following action will be taken by the school administration relative to the above suggestion:

Thank you very much for the time and effort that you have given on behalf of improving our school.

On the following pages are sample agendas, minutes, recommendations, and a feedback report, demonstrating the communication flow from the program advisory committee, and back again to the general advisory council.

AGENDA
Graphic Arts Program Advisory Committee Meeting

I. Review shop facilities and equipment
II. Review course of study
III. Student enrollment
IV. New trends in the occupational area
V. Employment outlook
VI. New business
VII Recommendations

MINUTES
Graphic Arts Program Advisory Committee Meeting

Attendance (names and school or industry affiliation):

I. Review shop facilities and equipment
Equipment needs updating to reflect emphasis on computer typesetting. More stations are needed.

II. Review course of study
With more computer-typesetting stations, the learning process would move more efficiently. Now students must learn one at a time.

III. Student enrollment
The program has seen 30 percent increase in enrollment over the past three years. Industry wants more graduates. With more stations, we could boost public relations to attract more students.

IV. New trends in the occupational area
Computerized typesetting and offset lithography continue to dominate the industry. Desktop publishing is gaining popularity.

V. Employment outlook. Excellent.

VI. New business
May wish to begin exploring training programs for desktop publishing.

VII. Recommendations
Invite one or more representatives of computer companies to join this committee to advise on trends in desktop publishing.
Seek donations and funds to expand computer-typesetting stations.
Invite industry representatives to speak to exploratory students about opportunities in graphic arts.

AGENDA
General Advisory Council Meeting

I. Welcome and introductions (by superintendent-director/vocational director).

II. Dinner

III. Program advisory committee presentations (list individual vocational/technical programs).

IV. Summary (by general advisory committee chairperson)
- A. Present status of the school
- B. Observed trends
- C. Recommendations

MINUTES
General Advisory Council Meeting

Attendance (list names and affiliations, i.e., with the school, program advisory committee, school committee, or other or attach list):

I. Program advisory committee presentations

HVAC This program needs more space, more equipment, and a third teacher. As industry uses more computers and solid-state equipment, we should keep up with those trends in our teaching. Taxpayers need to become educated as to the value and purpose of training in this occupational area.

Packaging Most of our equipment is donated and old, but still good for the principles being taught. Some new equipment is needed, specifically computers, bottling equipment, and both liquid and dry fill machines. We need a larger and more involved advisory committee. Public relations could be improved.

Graphic Arts This program is all offset lithography; very little letterpress is being used in the area at this time. The equipment, especially for computer typesetting, needs more updating. The advisory committee should be enlarged to help explore trends in desktop publishing.

Machine Shop Few students are choosing this program. We need better information about it. Success stories are needed for good public relations.

Automotive There has been great improvement in the use of repair manuals, specifications, and visual and audio aids. The computer equipment needs immediate attention, i.e., we need extra equipment and updated training.

II. Summary of the general advisory council chairperson

A. Present status of the school
- Increased enrollment overall
- Potential problems in Machine Shop program

B. Observed trends
- Negative perceptions among students and community of H.V.A.C. and Machine Shop programs
- Advent of computers in nearly all occupational areas
- Purchase new equipment for the Packaging and Automotive programs
- Enlarge program committee membership to reflect need for computer expertise.

C. Recommendations
- Purchase new equipment for the Packaging and Automotive programs
- Enlarge program committee membership to reflect need for computer expertise.
- Organize public relations efforts for vocational-technical education.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

1. Equipment
The General Advisory Council recommends that the following equipment be purchased:
- *bottling equipment and liquid and dry fill machines for Packaging*
- *computer diagnostic equipment for Automotive*

2. Program advisory committee membership
The General Advisory Council requests that the School Board assist in identifying representatives of the computer industry to recruit for membership in appropriate program advisory committees. Advisors are needed to advise on trends in computer use in these occupational areas.

The General Advisory Council suggests establishing a separate program advisory committee for computer applications in vocational-technical areas. This would give school administration a broader perspective on future needs and perhaps help to consolidate future equipment purchases to serve multiple program areas.

3. Public relations
The General Advisory Council recommends developing a speakers bureau of industry representatives for the purpose of improving community and student perceptions of vocational-technical education. A few program areas are experiencing declining enrollment despite continued industry demand for graduates.

Also, the General Advisory Council recommends producing a video presentation depicting vocational/technical students in school and in the industry.

Both the speakers bureau and the video would be available for assemblies of exploratory students and for community functions.

SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Equipment
The following purchases are authorized from present funds:
Computer diagnostic equipment for Automotive

2. Program advisory committee membership
Individual School Board members to offer recommendations of persons knowledgeable about the computer industry for recruitment to appropriate program advisory committees.

The School Board has voted to postpone creation of a new, computer industry program advisory committee, pending the outcome of recruitment efforts in this area. It seems that such individuals would be more effective as advisors to particular vocational/technical programs.

3. Public Relations
Funds are authorized for development of video presentation to assist in recruitment of new vocational/technical students and in general community public relations.

cc: Superintendent-director/vocational-technical director

Evaluating Committee Effectiveness

Is your school in compliance with the *Alabama Vocational Education Standards* governing vocational/technical advisory committees and councils? Does your school gain maximum benefit from its advisory committees? Are there ways to enhance the use of advisory committees? One way to answer these questions is to conduct periodic evaluations.

Assessment of an advisory committee's effectiveness can be performed by committee members themselves, by school personnel responsible for working with or coordinating the work of advisory committees, or by an outside evaluator. This last option will probably be costly and therefore rarely considered, although the results may be more thorough and impartial than the results of a study conducted by an "insider" to the process.

This chapter offers some guidelines for evaluating the effectiveness of advisory committees, whether by surveying committee members or by asking school personnel to complete a self-evaluation. It concludes with some suggestions for remedying common problems in managing vocational/technical advisory committees.

Evaluation by Advisory Committee

Asking advisory committee members to comment upon their roles is the technique used by the Alabama Department of Education,The Division of Vocational Education Services, in its review of local programs and general advisory councils. Schools may wish to review the interview schedule used by the State Department of Education to evaluate local programs, "Team Interview Outline for the Advisory Councils".

Surveys may be done to determine council member perception of council or committee effectiveness. Such a survey may be distributed to all persons listed as advisory committee members, regardless of their level of activity. Inactive members may have important reasons for their lack of participation, some of which may relate to their perception of the committee's effectiveness. Survey instruments should be mailed to advisory committee members sometime

around the date of their spring meeting, with instructions to return completed surveys by a certain date before the end of the school year. Administrators should simply review completed surveys to identify recurrent problems or areas needing improvement.

EVALUATION BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Teachers or other school personnel who are assigned to coordinate and supervise the operation of vocational/technical advisory committees might also be asked to evaluate the committee's effectiveness. Because this method amounts to self-evaluation, a simple checklist of key indicators should suffice to reveal problems or weaknesses.

Exhibit 24 offers a sample self-administered checklist for assessing the effectiveness of vocational/technical advisory committees. Those school personnel who work closely with the committees should complete the checklist near the end of the year, so that administrators can review them and institute corrective actions, if necessary, before school starts again in the fall. Some of the problems faced by vocational/technical advisory committees have to do with their composition and schedule of meetings; that is, in complying with the logistical requirements and standards. Preceding chapters of this manual have offered a number of suggestions for addressing those kinds of problems and by focusing a certain level of attention and resources to organizing and maintaining advisory committees, vocational/technical administrators should be able to resolve any logistical difficulties.

EXHIBIT 24

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING ADVISORY COMMITTEES

DIRECTIONS: Mark each question in relation to the operation of the advisory committee serving your vocational/technical program

	YES	NO
1. Is provision made for the permanence and continuity of the committee?		
2. Has the school board developed policies relative to:		
a. advisory committee functions?		
b. number of committee members?		
c. method by which members are chosen?		
d. method of replacing members when their terms expire or when vacancies occur?		
e. procedures for communicating with school personnel and school board members?		
f. relationships of the advisory committee to school board members, administrators, teachers, students, and the community?		
3. Are members of the advisory committee nominated by both the school staff and present committee members?		
4. Does the school board make the appointment of individuals to the advisory committee.		
5. Are members selected because of their:		
a. interest?		
b. knowledge?		
c. ability?		
d. willingness to serve?		
e. "segment of interest group" representation?		
6. Are members notified of their appointment by:		
a. letter?		
b. personal visit by a school representative?		

	YES	NO
7. Are committee members appointed for a definite length of time?		
8. Is the chairperson elected from the ranks of the committee?		
9. Is the school represented by ex officio members?		
10. Are members aware of the specific purposes for which the advisory committee is formed?		
11. Are committee members informed well in advance of meeting dates and places?		
12. Are committee meetings held only when sufficient need exists?		
13. Is publicity provided for committee activities?		
14. Are formal committee recommendations set forth in writing?		
15. Are committee recommendations channeled through appropriate school authorities?		
16. Does the advisory committee accept the philosophy that its duty is to recommend, not to administer?		
17. Does committee membership include representatives of appropriate business, industry, or occupations in the community?		
18. Are students and parents represented in committee membership?		
19. Is there a feeling of need for the advisory committee by:		
a. school board members?		
b. administrators?		
c. school staff/personnel?		
20. As related specifically to the evaluation of vocational-technical education, does the advisory committee:		
a. make suggestions concerning the objectives of the school program of vocational/technical education?		
b. advise on curriculum and materials development?		
c. make suggestions regarding the extent to which occupational skills and attitudes should be taught in the school?		
d. help develop instruments and procedures for tracking students' progress?		
e. help conduct surveys of former students, parents, and/or employers?		
f. help acquaint the community with the needs of vocational education?		
g. provide evaluative feedback to the school board, administration, employers, and other citizens?		
h. help assemble and analyze materials relative to program evaluation?		

DIRECTIONS: Answer the remaining questions, using the following key:

S = satisfactory progress in this area
P = only partial success in this area
N = not satisfied with progress in this area

	S	P	N
21. Do committee members possess a working knowledge of the philosophy and objectives of vocational/technical education?			
22. Is an information program provided that will keep committee members abreast of new developments in vocational/technical education?			
23. Is the committee formally organized?			
24. Does the facilitator perceive his or her duty largely as that of requesting rather than giving advice?			
25. Do school personnel work with the advisory committee when the committee is concerned with a specific portion of the school curriculum for which a school staff member is responsible?			
26. Are committee members invited to school functions?			
27. Are committee members considered part of the "school family"?			
28. Does the committee study and debate the issues before making final recommendations?			
29. Can the committee request that research be conducted by school personnel?			
30. Does the school provide adequate research services for the advisory committee?			

Adapted from Handbook for Local Vocational Education Advisory Councils, Nebraska Advisory Councils for Vocational Education, Lincoln, Nebraska, undated, pp. 11-13

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CORRECTING COMMON PROBLEMS

But there may be other problems that are more difficult to resolve, especially those arising from misunderstandings or misconceptions of the committee's purpose and role. These problems can also be addressed to improve the "image" of advisory committees in the school environment.

Exhibit 25 lists several problems that are common to advisory committees and suggests some simple remedial strategies.

Advisory committee meetings are not unlike other business-oriented meetings: They must be conducted with a purpose and in a serious manner if the resulting recommendations are to be taken seriously.

GOLD LEAF AWARDS

The Alabama Council on Vocational and Technical Education has created the "gold leaf award" which it gives to exemplary local general advisory councils annually.

The application for this recognition can be obtained from the council or through the State Department of Education. The criteria used to determine awardees closely parallels the Alabama Standards. The award itself, a framed certificate signed by the Chancellor, the Superintendent of Education, the President of the State Board of Education, and the council chairperson, is presented at the annual summer conference or directly to the school or institution at a special local council meeting. The public relations gained by winning the award can be substantial.

The gold leaf award represents another way to let council members as well as the general public know of their work and to express appreciation for the service of members.

EXHIBIT 25

COMMON PROBLEMS AND HOW TO RESOLVE THEM

PROBLEM	SUGGESTED REMEDIAL STRATEGY
The advisory committee is perceived as a "rubber stamp" committee; certain groups within the employment community are not represented on the committee.	Include members with diverse opinions, then set common goals. Disagreement can be constructive as long as all parties work toward common goals.
Information generated is not directly relevant to the actual or desired outcomes of the vocational program.	Make certain that the members represent specific target occupations-as employees, supervisors, and employers.
A "We-they" attitude exists between educational officials and the advisor committee.	Continually seek the cooperation of school officials and instructors; share ideas and information on a regular basis.
The advisory committee is perceived as an adversary of the instructor, administration, or the vocational program.	Do not focus on fault finding; rather, seek out areas in which the program can be commended as well as improved.
The committee's recommendations are unrealistic, reflecting decisions drawn from partial or biased information.	Seek all available and useful sources of information by performing committee studies, using consultants, interviewing knowledgeable people, and using statistical information.
There is a perception that the committee is not objective or systematic in carrying out its work plan.	Base activities and recommendations on factual, carefully collected and complete information, coupled with sound logic.
There is no action taken on, or discussion of the advisory committee' recommendations on the part of the school committee, school administration, or instructors.	Develop an effective strategy for presenting and justifying recommendations. Ask for written responses to the committee's recommendations.
There is ill will among a mis-or uninformed committee membership.	Notify members by phone and letter of date, time, and location of upcoming meetings and activities. Provide all necessary background information for the committee's discussion topics.
Advisors are frustrated by unfocused activity and wasted time.	Respect members' time in all matters. Distribute work equitably. Hold meetings only when needed. Develop, distribute, and follow an agenda and time schedule.
Advisors are confused over procedures when dealing with problems or contingencies.	Clearly define the operational procedures in the committee's bylaws.
Advisors are confused over the purpose, priorities, and plans for committee work activity.	Involve the entire committee in clearly defining the year's work plan. Circulate the plan as a written document.
Advisors are confused or resentful about being rushed into a study or position too quickly or without enough structure or information.	Organize information and activities early to avoid wasting time later.
Too few committee members do the majority of the work.	Provide time for leaders to emerge within the group. This applied to both tasks and overall group activities. Use subcommittees and assign tasks evenly.
There is a loss of interest or resentment among committee members.	Constantly seek to involve each member. Capitalize on members' specific knowledge, experience, commitment, and enthusiasm. Establish a supportive discussion environment. Recognize and reward members for their efforts.
Committee officers appear to lack appropriate skills.	Have the chairperson learn and use management techniques Anticipate potential problem areas and devise contingencies to deal with then in advance.